THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No special drives are conducted by the Armed Forces for the recruitment of any particular caste. Hence, no special drive for recruitment of Kashmiri Pandit youth is planned.

(b) Does not arise.

Indo-China joint military exercise

1567. SHRI RUMANDLA RAAMACHANDRAYYA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and China propose to hold joint military exercises as is being done with the United States; and

(b) by when a final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) India and China participated in a naval exercise on Search and Rescue (SAR) off Shanghai on November 14, 2003. The exercise was at a basic level. No other proposal for any further exercises between the Armed Forces of India and China is under consideration of the Government at present.

(b) In view of answer to part (a) above, question does not arise.

Purchase of Laser Guidance Kits/Penetration Bombs

1568. SHRI MURLI DEORA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether C&AG in his Report No. 7 of 2003 observed that the Ministry made purchases of laser guidance kits to penetration bombs at a higher price than the settled one;

(b) if so, the details and reasons therefor;

(c) the additional expenditure incurred as a result thereof;

(d) whether due to mismatch between the kits and the bombs, the shelf life of the kits was reduced; and

(e) if so, the reasons for going on emergency purchases and action taken on the report?